



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
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Draft Summary of Planned Work

Health Disparities

2001-03

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Presented to the Washington State Board of Health
March 13, 2002
Subject to Approval by the Full Board

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Overview:

The Health Disparities Committee's ongoing work will include promoting its 2001 recommendations on health care workforce diversity and participating in workforce development efforts to promote consideration of diversity goals. In addition to following up on past work, the Committee will focus on collaborating with the American Indian Health Commission (AIHC) to increase awareness of American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) health disparities and develop policies to reduce health disparities in Washington AI/AN communities.

Health Care Workforce Diversity Network

The Board approved recommendations made by the Health Disparities Committee in May 2001 that seek to improve the diversity of the state's health care workforce, as part of the Board's efforts to reduce health disparities.

The Board envisions that a broad-based public/private panel convened by individuals representing associations of health professionals, hospitals, community clinics, higher education, and public health officials will follow up on many of the Board's recommendations by:

1. Reviewing, refining, and promoting the use of the health career development program guidelines contained in the Board's final report on health disparities.
2. Compiling the recommended diversity report card.
3. Ensuring public and private funds are pursued to expand existing efforts.
4. Considering whether the state needs a way to systematically analyze and develop its health-care workforce, and if so, recommend a mechanism.
5. Reporting to the Board by Fall 2002 on workforce diversity efforts.

This panel, named the Health Care Workforce Diversity Network, met for the first time March 12, 2002. Additional meetings will be determined by the Network.

Participate in Health Disparities and Workforce Development Efforts

A variety of groups are working on reducing health disparities and on workforce development. One of these groups is the Health Justice Network, currently based in King County and made up of people working in public health, health care organizations, the University of Washington, health foundations and other organizations. The Health Justice Network (HJN) held a conference on Race, Class, Ethnicity and Health: Strategies and Recommendations for Eliminating Health Disparities, on September 8, 2000. The HJN is currently developing a work plan and strategizing on the future of the organization. Board staff has played an active role in HJN.

Groups meeting on workforce development issues include the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's health care workforce shortages workgroup, the Public Health Improvement Plan Workforce Development Committee, the Public Health Executive Leadership Forum Workforce Development Committee. Board staff has participated in these groups' meetings to raise awareness about the Board's recommendations on improving workforce diversity and their impact on health disparities.

Reducing Health Disparities in American Indian/Alaskan Native Communities

The Board held a joint meeting on January 9, 2002 with the American Indian Health Commission to raise awareness about AI/AN health disparities in Washington State, and to discuss policy options to address these disparities.

Meetings will be held with AIHC and Board members to follow up on the January joint meeting to discuss the policy options proposed on January 9, 2002, and develop additional policy options. Board staff will assist AIHC and Board members in preparing policy options for presentation at the Tribal Health Summit in fall of 2002 and the 2003 legislative session.

Tasks	Timeline
Distributed Board's final report on health disparities	September 2001
Facilitate convening of Health Care Workforce Diversity Network – first meeting held on March 12, 2002	ongoing
Health Care Workforce Diversity Network reports to Board	November 2003
Coordinated joint AIHC and SBOH meeting	January 9, 2002
AIHC – SBOH meeting follow up: Discuss policy recommendations to 2003 legislature	April 2002 through January 2003
Participate in additional meetings and activities	ongoing